

## Andrew Jackson to Hugh Lawson White, February 7, 1827, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO HUGH L. WHITE.

Hermitage, February 7, 1827.

*My Dear Sir*, I have Just recd. your letter of the 17th ult and hasten to answer it. I had before its receipt seen and read your address to the assembly who were celebrating the 8th of January last in the city. feeling the obligation I was under for your kindness in representing me at that festive board, I had requested my friend Major Eaton to present you with my gratefull thanks for your kindness on that occasion. I can assure you, I was not prepared to hear that any thing you had said, would have given offence to Mr Monroe, for however much he might have thought that my services had been overated by you, still he had often seen himself eulogized for aid afforded in the defence of the lower country which had never been given, without anything said by me, and without giving me any heart burnings.

Mr Monroe, has often heard through the public presses as much praise ascribed to me for the defence of the lower country as has been spoken by you; and why was he silent then, and offended now. *he ought to be silent* , for he does know that orders Issued by the Sec of War were withheld from me, alltogether important for the defence of the lower country, and that I was entirely destitute of funds, but what I procured at my own responsibility late in octbr 1814 that enabled me to march on Pensacola and dislodge the British and Indians, and he does know, that the proper means of defence was neglected to have been furnished me; I was only prevented from making a full expose of the destitute state of the means of defence in which that section of country was left by the goverment, and that it

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was only preserved by the kindness of an overruling providence, and the vigilance and great exertions made by those engaged in its defense. fence. But upon cool reflection and the advice of a sage, I forebore, recollecting that it might detract from the national charecter, that it was my pride and boast to exalt. I cannot therefore believe, that Mr Monroe will appear before the public, unless indeed he has been under the rose, aiding the coalition to destroy my force, and inducing the Sec of the Navy at public dinners, to pronounce that he Mr Monroe is entitled to all the credit of the defence of Orleans, and whilst I was arrested in my desertion from the army by Mr Monroes *energetic order*.

should I find Mr Monroe engaged in such a base course, which I hope I never shall, I will unrobe his hypocrisy and strip him, of much of his borrowed plumage. altho I have had many warnings of his duplicity, still I cannot believe that he has *hitched* himself to the car of the coalition. if he has, I will not only furnish you with the means for your defence, but will lay all facts before the nation, who will then Judge the *administration by its acts* , and determine how far the military skill, its orders, and means furnished for defence of the lower country by the goverment, merit applause or censure—for it is certainly true that the lower country, was left without the proper means of defence altho timely notice was had by our goverment to have furnished them, if proper vigilance had been used.

Whether blame was to be ascribed to the Department of War, or to its subordinates, is for them to settle amonghst themselves, I will detail a few facts, and you can Judge how far you have done injustice to the then administration, and how far Mr Monroe has Just ground of complaint, and I refer you to Mr Edward Livingston who was an active agent with me in the defence of New-orleans, who will Testify to the total want of means furnished by the goverment.

Now to the facts. In the month of June 1814 I transmitted to the sec of war documents sent to me by express informing that the British force was at Pensacola, in full command of the Town and was organising and diciplining the hostile Indians and furnishing them with supplies, and exciting them to war on our frontier borders, and requesting the sec of war

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to furnish me with the necessary orders, on the fact found as stated to be true, to march and expell them. It appears, that the then Sec of War Genl Armstrong on the 18th of July 1814, Issued a discretionary order authorising me, if the British was in Pensacola etc. etc., to enter and expell them, as we had a right to do, on the broad principles of self defence. This order never reached me untill after peace was declared, altho I have been informed by a friend, to whom Genl Parker, then adjt Genl and Inspector said that he had put this letter himself in the post office and on the next day had seen it on the table of Mr Monroe then sec of State. See Major Eaton on this subject.

After sending the sec of war the forgoing documents, being on my way to receive the submission of the Hostile creeks at Ft Jackson agreeable to the orders of the goverment, I dispatched my faithfull spy Capt John Gordon to Pensacola who returned and reported to me at Ft Jackson on the 10th of August. on that day I wrote the sec of war, that from the report of my confidential agent sent to Pensacola, that it was true that the British was in compleat possession of Pensacola, their flag flying 24 on the Spanish forts, and the Indians armed and uniformed by them, and all in readiness to make an attack upon us. This was acknowledged to have been recd by Mr Monroe, then sec of war, of date 7th of Septbr, no order to expell the enemy, who was concentrating all their force there to invade us, or quarter masters stores, or funds to procure them, to enable me to operate and destroy them before their reinforcements daily expected Joined them. On the 27th of August I recd. confidentially, information on which I relied, of the sailing from Plymoth, and the concentration of a very formidable force by Great Britain to invade Mobile and Neworleans. This required every exertion in my power and the goverments, to meet the approaching crisis, and if possible strike the enemy at Pensacola and destroy or expell him before reinforcements arrived.

I immediately dispatched by express to the sec of war the information received, made requisitions on the governors of Tennessee Mississippi, Louisiana, for all the Troops I was then authorised to call for by the govt. viz, from Tennessee 2500 infantry, Mississippi, 500, and Louisiana, 1000, and wrote to Govr Shelby and appealed to his patriotism for

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aid in this trying emergency—and on my own responsibility made an appeal to my old volunteers in Tennessee to repair to the defence of the Eagles of their country that was [ *mutilated* ] me on my own responsibility, fifty thousand dollars to enable me to commence operations and to expell the enemy from Pensacola before the expected reinforcements arived, which was necessary to be done before I could leave that section of my command and repair to N. Orleans. I had given the necessary orders to Colo. McCrea and Governor Claibour[n] to have Neworleans placed in the best state of defence the means in their reach would permit. Genl Coffee reached me on the 28th of Octbr. preceded by Colo. Butler and quartermaster Thomas Camp, with \$25.000 procured from the Nashville Bank. This enabled me to commence operations.

I marched for Pensacola, and stormed it on the morning of the 7th of Novbr. 1814 and on the 14 of Novbr. made report of this opperation to the sec of war. *Note* , it was Genl Coffees corps, brought into the field, on my own responsibility armd and equipped by your own exertions and the funds procured [on my] own responsibility and the aid of friends, that enabled me by this movement to clear the left flank of my district from the enemy and enabled me to move with Genl Coffees Brigade on the 22d of Novbr. for Orleans ordering the Genl to Baton rouge there to remain for orders. With this Brigade, the regulars about 500 strong, faced the uniformed Batalions of .1 Genl Coffee by a forced march of one hundred and twenty miles in two days reached me in time to fight the enemy on his center. I would like to be informed what great agency the Govrt. had in these movements, it is true, that some time in Octbr. the General goverment placed in the hands of Govr. Blount, one hundred thousand dollars in Treasury notes which enabled him to move the last requisition from Tennessee, who by a providential act, the rise of the water and the great exertions of the officers who lead them reached

1 Four lines mutilated so that they cannot be read.

me at a happy moment to repell the enemy, but would have been entirely destitute of arms had it not have been that Genl Carroll falling in with a boat with arms, placed under a guard, and compelled it on, gave his division and Genl Coffees brigade a small supply.

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Note—Genl Coffees men were armed but the wet weather and no tents, they became very rusty and damp the springs of the locks broke.

I had written to the Sec of War on the 5th and 8th of Septbr. 1814 that the British with their alies and [ *mutilated* ] were preparing to attack [ *mutilated* ], and begging him for orders to expell them—still silent—I wrote him again on the 17th of Septbr. informing him of the combined attack by sea and land of Ft Bow[y]er, by the British and Indian force, and of their repulse and retreat to Pensacola, and of my intention so soon as I had a force competant that I would strike the enemy in his hold at Pensacola. The sec of war had wrote me on 27th August 2 rece[i]pt of mine of august 23d, 24, 25th and 27th—still no orders to attack the British in Pensacola. I send you a copy of this letter, that you may be able to contrast it with his letter of the 16th of Decbr, and his orders of the 7th to genl Gains and the Genl report of the 4th of Febyr 1815—hereafter noted. you will discover, that I was daily bringing to the view of the goverment the necessity of expelling the enemy from Pensacola and thereby give security to this District, before which, I could not proceed to Neworleans, which in all my letters on that head I kept the Sec advised, that and that alone was my object and the moment it could be effected, I would with the Vollunteers of Genl Coffee repair to cover and defend N. O.

2 Two lines here are illegible.

Let it be remembered, that the requisition from Tennessee were infantry, they were ordered to Mobile, they were mostly from East Tennessee, had not arrived, and I had no force to spare from the defence of that section untill the British was beaten from our border, or untill the East Tennessee troops and those afterwards ordered for its defence had arrived. had I left that section of country before I had expelled the enemy from Pensacola, our frontier borders would have been deluged with blood, Ft Bowyer taken, Mobile and our whole country overrun by the British and Indians and a lodgement made on the Mississippi at the chikesaw Bluff, the supplies for the lower country, from the upper entirely cut off, and the lower country 3 information the Govr. had received that Louisiana

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was to be attacked through Mobile. such was my information, and such my anxiety to receive orders to that effect, but seeing that the Salvation of my country depended upon this movement, I was determined under every responsibility to make it expell the enemy from Pensacola before their reinforcement arrived and cut off all supplies. this I did, and preserved Neworleans and Mobile both.

3 Two and a half lines illegible through mutilation.

I ask what aid did the Govrt. give me in this movement—let us see, I have said before that I had recd. the first and only funds on the 22d of Octbr. and on the 7th of Novbr. I entered and reduced Pensacola, and no military man I am sure will say but this movement was the only movement to preserve my country and to enable me to repair to defend and cover Neworleans. Mr Monroe writes me on the 7th of Decbr, that he has recd. mine of the 23. and 31 of Octbr, and hopes, that his of 21st of Octbr had reached me in time to prevent me from marching on Pensacola, and if I had to deliver it, *saying* I had only entered it to free it from British violation—read the letter referred to and you will see he was altogether for negotiation with Spain and the order Issued by Sec Armstrong still withheld from me. I send you a copy of this letter for your perusal and information. I will barely remark, he as a military man from the information I had given him could not suppose, that I charged with the defence of the lower mississippi, if I knew any thing of military matters, would or could leave that section of country whilst the British were organising and concentrating their force to invade Louisi'a through Mobile? a military man, retire from the point the enemy was concentrating to invade, leave him unmolested in his preparation, retire to another section of country where the enemy had not appeared and leave the enemy an open march to the banks of the mississippi—where with the overwhelming force of the enemy he could have cut off all supplies from the country, and all below must have surrendered at discretion. I did not pursue this course, I had a carefull eye over neworleans intending to anticipate him so soon as he unmask this to be his view. Therefore as soon as I had expelled the British from Pensacola, I set out for and reached Neworleans on the first day of Decbr, 1814, having seperated from Genl. Coffee, ordering him to Baton Rough, myself

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taking a reconesance of the Gulph and lakes to see whether an enemy could land and penetrate to the rear and to the river above Neworleans, and to give orders for stock of all kind to be removed from coast into the interior to be put beyond the supply of the enemy.

My first object of inquiry on reching N. O. was to see and examine into the state of the arsnal and to my great surprise and mortification found it destitute of every means of formidable defence—no field artillery in readiness for the field but two Twelve pounders one 9 inch Howitzer 26 lbs, and not one piece of Batering Cannon on carriages, and none of any kind of corse calliber but what belonged to the Navy—no spades or intrenching tools, no arms but what were already in the hands of the militia fit for service, and no flints, and but few musquet catridges, and fixed amunition, and but 25 artillerist in the arsnal, and these 25, the only artillerist that we had to work our batteries before the enemy. all these def[e]nces, were to be made and procured somehow, and our cannon of large cannon procured from the Navy, and mounted. these belonged to the blockship on her stocks at or near Madison<sup>4</sup> and brought across the bay.

4 Madisonville, La., on the Chefuncte River, near its mouth, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

Thus situated, I was looking up the river for arms and ordinance and ordinance stores, requisitions have[ing] been made as early as Septbr. 1814, and acknowledged to have been recd, and that the requisition should be filled. when the steamboat from Pittsburgh arived, and reported no arms, ordinance or ordinance stores on the way, that a proposition had been made by the Supercargo to bring the arm and stores for 75/100 pr ct, and obligate himself to deliver them to me at Neworleans in 18 days. This offer was rejected by the Capt of Ordinance at Pittsburgh and the arms freighted by a Mr Maples, who it appeared was a kind of merchant Pedlar, at 50/100 pr ct, with priviledge to barter his goods on the way for wheat, etc. etc. and it did appear before the Court Martial before whom he was brought, that he had stoped at Louisville, and had a cargo of wheat ground into flower—and producing his articles entered into with the Capt of Ordinance



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at Pittsburgh Mr Maples was acquitted, these proceedings sent to the Dept of War, with a request from me that the agent should be arrested and punished for this conduct. This was not done—see my letter and proceedings of courtmartial in the war office at the city. It is believed, I write from memory, that Capt Woolly of ordinance, instead of being punished was retained in the service at the reduction of the army on the peace establishment.

Thus situated without arms or flints and the enemy on our borders, it was made known to me that the Baratarians, on promise of pardon, on evidence of good conduct, would submit, and furnish us with all the arms and flints in their possession. I readily gave my assent to this proposition and through my volunteer aid Mr Edward Livingston the arrangement was effected, and I procured from them 7500 flints for pistols and boarding peaces, which was solely the supply of flints for all my militia and if it had not been for this providential aid the country must have fallen. I refer you to Mr E. Livingston of the House of Representatives for a detailed information on this and all other circumstances relative to the defence of Neworleans. I ask again, why has, or how can your address have raised the ire of Mr Monroe, when we find a country as important as Neworleans is, and its importance adverted to in his letter of 10th of Decbr to me—left so exposed and destitute of the means of Defence. If these facts and circumstances does not Justify, they ought to excuse your expression as it respects myself. I ask where is their one solitary act done by the sec of war to aid in the defence of the lower country but his authority to make the requisitions on the states—and forwarding to Govr. Blount 100,000\$ in Treasury notes. where is the order by the sec of War to his agents to send on arms and other munitions of War for the militia—Where the punishment afflicted upon the subordinate for disobedience of the orders of the Dept, for not forwarding on supplies agreeable to requisitions and when Mr Monroe was informed, as he was, that militia from Tennessee could be got, but there were not arms to put into their hand. see copy of Major Lewis certificate inclosed.<sup>5</sup> I hold it the duty of

<sup>5</sup> This certificate is not preserved, but the substance is perhaps contained in the following extract from a letter from Lewis to Jackson, Feb. 10, 1827:



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“On the first day of September 1814 I left Nashville for Washington city, and arrived there about the 28th, I think, of the same month. After I had been in the city a day or two Genl. Parker, then principal clerk in the War Office, called on me and observed that Col. Monroe, who was then acting as Secretary of War, was desirous of seeing me. I told him that I would do myself the pleasure of calling on him Mr. Monroe at any time it would be convenient for him to see me. Genl. Parker then requested me to call at Col. Monroe's office on the next day at a certain hour, which I did and was, if I mistake not, introduced to Mr. Monroe by him. After some conversation of a general nature, with regard to the Western country, Mr. Monroe observed to me that the government either had, or was about to make a requisition on the Governor of Tennessee for 5,000 drafted militia and on Kentucky for 2,500, and enquired of me if I thought there would be any difficulty in getting so large a number of troops into the field from Tennessee. I replied I thought not; but at the same time observed that I apprehended the greatest difficulty would be in procu[r]ing arms for them, that I was sure they could not be had in Tennessee, and unless provided by the general government a large proportion of the men would march without arms. This I told him I was confident would be the case in our state; and that I had every reason to believe it would also be the case in Kentucky, as there was a general scarcity of arms, (such as ought to be placed in the hands of a soldier,) in the Western country. I well recollected the difficulty there had been in procu[r]ing arms for the Militia ordered into service du[r]ing the creek campaign, indeed after every exertion that could be made, to procure arms, a large number of the men marched against the enemy without any. Having a personal knowledge of these facts, I was particularly anxious to impress upon the mind of the Secretary of War the necessity of providing the men with arms. Col. Monroe observed to me, as well as I now recollect, that arms either had, or would be sent to Orleans for them. This conversation took place in the early part of October 1814.”

all superiors, in military operations, not only to give orders, but to know that there orders are carried into effect, and particularly when an important section of our country was invaded with such an overwhelming force.

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It may be well asked If I did not create the means of defence, from whence did it come—was it furnished by the War Dept, no—or by whom besides me and my officers who were with me. I not only created the most of the mean of defence of the lower country but at my own responsibility the means to get those brave men home again who had so nobly aided me in its defence, I had to make arrangements with the Banks on my own responsibility for fifty thousand dollars to get the Troops home. I drew bills on government, being so authorised, my bills were protested and sent back—the first and only bills of mine ever protested, these bills were afterwards taken up by the Govt.

I cannot close this long narative without stating, that from the time I left Mobile I never recd. a communication from the Govrt. untill the 18th of Febry when I recd. under cover of Lieut Smith of artillery of the 7th Febry 1815 a Duplicate of Mr Monroes letter to me of the 10th of Decbr 18146 from the tenor of these letters, the time of recpt. being marked by express. I inclose copies for your information, as well as my answer on the moment of its receipt, on the 18th of Fbry 1815. I also inclose you a copy of the Sec of Wars order to Genl Gains of 7th Decbr. 1814 and the Genls Report to me the 4th of Febry 1815. I wish you to compare these carefully, particularly that part of Genl Gains report when he says he had sollicit[ed]ed indulgence to spend three weeks in Tennessee, but meeting the newspaper at the mouth of cumberland etc. etc. etc. he hastened etc. etc. to me—and see whether you can draw any other conclusion but both the order to Genl Gains, and Mr Monroes dispatch to me of Decbr 10th 1814 were Issued for the purpose of having in the war office on file, believing for the want of the proper means of Defence New Orleans had fallen and myself with it. I add Major Lewis Certificate, which leaves no room for Mr Monroe to get out of the delemma of either himself or his Subordinate neglecting their duty, one of whom if Orleans had fell ought to have suffered death for this shear and I might add criminal neglect, leaving such a place as Orleans so destitute

6 See vol. II., pp. 110, 173.

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of the means of defence.<sup>7</sup> I just add a copy of Capt Woollys letter of the 18th January 1815 and he say the supply sent is without order or requisition. let it not be forgot that a requisition had been made in Sept 1814 and recpt acknowledged. This letter speaks Volumes that the Govt. believed I was gone and the supplies if sent would fall into the hands of the enemy, but I beg you to examine the supplies, I had required 32lb and 24ds, he send 6 prs and fixed amunition for 4ds.—one other fact and I close, that my men for the want of Shotpouches or catridgeboxes had to tie a string around their middle, and carry their catridges in their boosoms.

<sup>7</sup> Against the latter part of this sentence Jackson has written in the margin the word “softened.”

I have stated a few facts, you can now Judge how much penance you owe to the administration of that day for the injury Mr Monroe complains of—should Mr Monroe come out, and really for his own sake, I wish him to keep silent, when I see the ground that he assumes, there are still [some] facts if necessary to sustain [you] in what you have said. Still I hope he will have prudence to be silent. It may be that he assumes the stand taken in terrorum to shield Mr Southard from the delicate situation in which he has placed himself by a public declaration at Fredericksburgh Va. I hope and trust he cannot be the author of Mr Sec Southards declarations, which I have stated positively untrue. If he is, notwithstanding the regret I will ever feel to find Mr Monroe acting hypocritically, or giving out intimations unfounded and untrue to effect my charecter under the auspices of sincere and professed friendship, he cannot he must not expect me to be silent.

On the receipt of this I wish you to converse with Mr E. Livingston who can vouch for the want of every means of proper defence when I came to orleans

I am respectfully yr friend